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77 D.

EXHIBITION OF DESIGN & WORKMANSHIP IN PRINTING

LEICESTER MUNICIPAL ART GALLERY
MARCH 11th to APRIL 26th
1916

Organised in conjunction with the Design & Industries Association

F GAYTON DESIGNER LEICESTER

77 D.

EXHIBITION OF DESIGN AND WORKMANSHIP in PRINTING

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11. IX. 1917

FOREWORDS

THE *Design and Industries Association* h[illegible] has been formed to promote the use of better design in all British industries and products—from buildings to wrapping-paper and string, from the laying out of cities to the form of the letters of the alphabet.

It regards fitness for its function as the first principle of design and it offers as a general definition of good work—perfect fitness plus appropriate finish.

It urges on all manufacturers, employers, and craftsmen consideration of the problems of design in an endeavour to improve the quality of our products all round from the point of view of national efficiency Such interest is the source of power in invention and design, while success in skilled industries is becoming more and more essential to the welfare of a modern community. The Association would call attention to even the humblest matters: as clear, well-set-out printing in circulars; clean, legible window tickets; bright and orderly window-dressing, and neat packing.

While not in any way opposed to pictorial art, the Association would point out that ornamental design—often of the simplest character—may be much more appropriate and economical for trade purposes; generally clearness, effectiveness, precision, vitality, and freshness should be aimed at.

Attention may be called to the fact that in all our larger towns, schools of art have for a long while been

in existence. In some places the good custom has been growing upof obtaining advice from the staff and designs from the better trained pupils of these schools. This practise is strongly recommended by the Association, for even if the result should in some cases prove disappointing, the principle is sound and must result in a heightening of power and improvement of taste.

PREFACE

IT is through the courtesy and active co-operation of the Leicester Municipal Museum and Art Gallery Committee that the Design and Industries Association is enabled to present this exhibition of printed matter, and the Committee of the D.I.A. wishes at the outset to express appreciation of their generous and helpful attitude and sincere thanks for the opportunity which the exhibition affords of presenting the ideas and principles of the D.I.A. to an intelligent public.

The collection here shown consists very largely of printed matter used for commercial purposes, and we have in showing it a very practical object in view.

That object is not to presume to establish a rigid or final standard of design or to circumscribe the field of experiment. Freedom is necessary for artistic achievement, and we are not unmindful that the chief danger of reforming zeal is to fetter individuality: to substitute new shackles for old.

Our object is to illustrate one or two main principles of right design and decoration, the transgression of which patently leads to bad work.

Let us begin with a definition of design. Design is the plan of construction—the arranging of how a thing should be made. It is much wider than (though it may include) ornament and illustration. The term covers, for instance, the right placing of a panel of black type on a white page, or the planning of an inkpot so that it shall not readily overturn.

It is almost universally true that if the chair-maker makes his chair with this purpose in his mind, that a chair's a thing to sit upon with comfort and safety, he will go far to turning out a decent chair. If he will take the trouble to calculate the strength of his materials he will avoid clumsiness (and waste) on the one hand, instability on the other. If he wishes to make his chair cheap (and why not?—we are not all millionaires) he will do well to keep it as simple as possible, for obviously he cannot introduce complications without added expense, and therefore must sacrifice essentials somewhere if he is to be able still to sell cheap. He will be forgetting that a chair without a particle of what he calls decoration can be an honest, useful, and beautiful thing; as, for instance, the rush-bottom church chairs, sold for about 3s. 6d. the piece.

And it may not be out of place to establish in passing another axiom of right design and manufacture. No material should be "faked" to imitate another. If our chair be made of one of the less valuable woods, it should not be stained to look like mahogany. Let it be frankly stained or painted black or any other honest colour.

Again, if, leather being expensive, a substitute is invented, we need not be so "precious" as to condemn it. But we can insist on its not being made up to imitate pigskin. It never will look the least like pigskin, but will always carry plain for all to see the mournful evidences of its fraud.

This axiom steers us past all such mistakes as making wall-paper to represent tiles, or linoleum to simulate

parquet work; plaster pilasters or iron mantel-shelves to look like marble; deal doors grained like—well, like nothing actually on earth, but alleged to be like oak; transparent paper to imitate stained glass, and a score of other such imbecilities.

If you want a biscuit-box you really ought not to make it look like a bag of golf clubs, or six volumes of Shakespeare, or a Chippendale cabinet—all current examples. Such monstrosities make thoroughly bad boxes. Design your box frankly for what it is meant to be, a receptacle to hold sweets or biscuits; decorate it gaily with an amusing pattern, bold or delicate as your fancy dictates, and your biscuit-box may become really a thing of beauty (see exhibit), and long after its contents are consumed may serve as a work-box or tea-caddy that a princess might be content to use. You will find, as is common in such returns to sanity, that you have also decreased the cost of your manufacture.

So much, by way of illustration, from common objects in our daily lives. Now to our particular business of printing, which the above familiar examples will help us the more readily to understand.

The purpose of printing being in the main to inform to be read, the first requirement for "fitness in use" must be legibility. We can apply that at once. A letter which is so fussy and intricate as to be illegible, or hardly legible, is *ipso facto* a badly-designed letter. There has been a common fashion to describe such letters as "artistic." It is the main plank of our thesis that a letter (or any other thing) so crippled in its primary function can never be good art.

We should, indeed, be well content to establish this one essential principle: that good design is tested first and chiefly by fitness, secondly, by pleasantness in use.

"Fitness" is a matter that can be demonstrated; "pleasantness" trenches on questions of taste, as to which we claim no sort of right to dictate. But, if the first of these tests—fitness in use—were generally accepted both by the public and by the manufacturers, there would be swept out of existence whole battalions of futile, ugly, needlessly complicated (and to that extent necessarily expensive) things, to the eternal advantage of us all, who as human and social beings are so constituted as to be profoundly affected for good or ill by our intimate environment.

Let us examine this test in relation to common things of daily use.

If you make a drawing-room chair with frail spindle legs, so that when any well-nourished person sits upon it a wave of apprehension lest he be let down overwhelms his hostess—that's a bad chair. If you cover the seat with velvet, surrounded by chenille tassels, and thereby make it so sticky that a man feels very much as if he were sitting on a fly-paper, while the housewife finds that nothing short of a serious operation will get the dust out of it—that also is a bad chair. If the manufacturer, thinking further to decorate it, weakens its back by fretwork or arranges a carved boss which sticks into the nape of an average neck, there you have bad, because entirely misapplied, art.

[Incidentally, the word "artistic" should be banished from the English vocabulary for two generations of men, and the noble word "art" itself might very well be withheld from use in all matters connected with manufacturing and advertisement.]

A page that is over-elaborately decorated to the point of confusion to the eye is a bad page.

One may except the title-page of a book, which is a kind of jolly flourish to which greater liberty should be allowed; notwithstanding, some of the most beautiful title-pages are produced with the greatest simplicity and economy of material. We have exhibited many illustrations to show that such simplicity and economy is not incompatible with distinction and variety and (a very necessary feature in all advertising matter) attention-compelling power.

We have shown how a trader has taken the trouble to design all his stationery, wrapping papers, and promotion matter on a consistent plan, without extravagance, and, as he would be the first to admit, on a dividend-making basis.

If we consider the main purpose of the poster—namely to create a definite impression at a distant on a hurried and distracted observer—we find that simplicity in general design, in colour and in message is imperative. Turning to our examples, we also find that those posters are most effective which have carried that simplification to the farthest point—such as the incomparable work of the Beggarstaff Brothers.

They are, moreover, less costly to produce—a practical advantage which we hope will not be lost on the business man.

Showcards and the smaller posters, which are designed to be seen at close quarters and at greater leisure, may of course be profitably designed in a more detailed way. But even here it may be said generally that brilliance, as opposed to muddiness of colour, is the result of deliberate and conscious simplification.

For the rest, we must be content to let the exhibits speak for themselves, in the consciousness that they will be their own best advocates.

ROOM A—GROUP A1.

Top Row.

"The Shepherd," a railway poster, lithographed by Harry Becker. (Publicity scheme, Underground Railway Co.)

Two school pictures, for teaching French, by Fred Taylor.

Middle and Bottom Row.

Lithographs for various trade purposes.

Bottom Row.

Typography: Title and Book pages, business announcements, stationery, alphabets for initial letters, and ornamental borders used in adjacent specimens.

GROUP A2.

Top Row.

A railway poster, "The Thames with St. Paul's." Lithographed by Joseph Pennell. Red Cross Fund Poster, designed by Frank Brangwyn, A. R. A. "Outside the Abbey," original Lithograph by Kerr Lawson.

Middle Row.

Two facsimiles of drawings by Holbein in the Windsor collection.

Three facsimiles of bookbinding. A School picture by W. Russell Flint, A.R.W.S.

Bottom Row.

Specimens of typography for various trade purposes. Trade picture-stamps, certificates and facsimiles of two Russian Ikons.

GROUP A3.

Top.

Wood engravings by Graham Robertson illustrating "A Masque of May Morning."

Below.

Title page for folio of etchings and Zinc-block print by Anthony R. Barker.

Catalogue covers, dance programmes and tickets.

Original Lithograph, "The Forge," by A. S. Hartrick.

Two pages from Le Morte D'Arthur and four pages of poems by Horace, printed by the Riccardi Press.

Case containing specimens of book printing by Bruce Rogers, Cambridge, U.S.A. (lent by Emery Walker.)

GROUP A4.

Top Row.

Poster by Geo. Kruger. "At the Theatre," and another lithograph by F. Ernest Jackson. (Underground Railway Publicity Department).

Two handbills advertising a new novel.

Centre Row.

Typography: Handbills and book pages. "Hammersmith Bridge," lithographed by W. Ridgway.

Bottom Row.

Lithographs: Illustration to Kipling's "City of Sleep," by Spenser Pryse. Picture for a child's nursery by Dora McLaren and "Visions," Susan B. Pearse.

"A Belgian town," A. Baertsoen.

"Moonlit Street," B. Pennethorne.

"Canal in Flanders," A. Baertsoen.

Theatre and Circus advertisements by R. Marshall and M. Klein.

Design by M. Layng, and "Ealing Common," by W. Ridgway.

GROUP A5.

Top Row.

A humorous poster for Underground Railway Co., by MacDonald Gill. Two lithographed posters by Frank Brangwyn, A.R.A., "The Re-making of Belgium" and "Belgian and Allies League."

Middle Row.

Two original lithographs and four facsimile lithographs from paintings and drawings, by pupils of the L.C.C. Central School of Arts and Crafts.

Bottom Row.

Stationery, labels, pamphlets, &c., used by a Furnishing House.

GROUP A6.

Top Row.

Lithograph by Spenser Pryse.
Two posters "The Dynasts," by W. Nicholson.

Middle Row.

Lithographs for various trade advertisements:—Toy shop, travel agency, almanac, &c.

Bottom Row.

Costume and Drapery Trade announcements.

GROUP A7.

Top Row.

Two sheets of plain lettering advertising furniture and pottery.
Lithographs by pupils of the L.C.C., Camberwell School of Arts and Crafts.
Title pages, letter headings, tickets, and other business stationery.

CASE A8.

Various books and pamphlets issued by Railway and Shipping Companies. A land sale catalogue and pages from "The Stockbroker."

CASE A9.

Finely printed books with work of the Eragny, Vale, and Riccardi Presses. A book of designs by Pamela Coleman Smith.

CASES A10 & A11

Full bound, half bound, cloth and paper bound books, following good traditions. Books illustrated in various ways in harmony with type and setting. "End-papers" and a substitute for "Marbling."

On top of cases some gay designs for box coverings.

STAND A12.

Plates and pages from gay Parisian Fashion Books.

ROOM B.—GROUP B13.

Top Row.

Three Posters advertising boots, wools and mustard.

Middle Row.

Letter headings, stationery, business announcements and box covers.

Bottom Row.

Set of picture stamps by Anthony R. Barker. Window tickets in a good tradition. Drapery Trade announcements.

GROUP B14.

Top Row.

Poster by Frank Brangwyn, A.R.A.

Two small bills advertising country places (Underground Rly. Co.)

Middle and Bottom Rows.

Pamphlets and other matter advertising Footwear, well planned letter headings, etc.

GROUP B15.

TOP ROW.

Poster by Frank Brangwyn, A.R.A., Poster for a Steam Ship Line by E. A. Cox and a gay Poster by S. T. C. Weeks.

MIDDLE AND BOTTOM ROWS.

Original settings and revisions. In this group an endeavour has been made to illustrate by contrast how the same matter may be poorly and illegibly, or more tellingly and readably set out.

GROUP B16.

Two Shipping posters by Frank Brangwyn, A.R.A. and W. L. Wyllie, R.A.

Posters and work of the Leicester Municipal School of Art, comprising Typography, three colour printing lithography, gold blocking, Copper-plate and photo-litho printing, &c.

GROUP B17.

Set of trade announcements, pamphlets and stationery. Covers of pamphlets advertising Italian State Railways. Title pages, receipt and order forms.

GROUP B18.

TOP ROW.

Riverside poster by Anthony R. Barker.
Three Shipping and one Drapery poster.

MIDDLE ROW.

Eleven sheets, part of a set of newspaper advertisements. A gay biscuit-box cover, etc.

BOTTOM ROW.

Four-colour reproduction of a picture, the "Golden Hind," by Frank Brangwyn, A.R.A.
Set of trade stationery, title pages, magazine covers, a decorator's announcement, and a map.

GROUP B19.

TOP ROW.

Two posters in plain type. Three "streamers" (and at bottom) sets of window tickets, etc., to be used with these for the boot trade.

MIDDLE ROW.

Title pages and other specimens of typography.

SLOPING CASE B20.

Collection of colour books by Walter Crane, Kate Greenaway. M. B. de Monvel, Arthur Rackham, and work by Russian artists,

SLOPING CASE B21.

Covers and various announcements by George Kruger and MacDonald Gill.
Trade and auctioneers' catalogues, pamplets to advertise railways and shipping, printers' advertising matter and a pamphlet on "Industrial Efficiency," duplicate copies of which may be had on application to the Municipal School of Art.

The remainder of the Stands numbered 22 to 41 are in the Central Hall.

STANDS 22 & 23.

IN THE HALL.

Collotype reproduction of picture entitled "The Sackville Children" by John Hoppner.

Photogravure reproduction of "Nelly O'Brien" by Sir Joshua Reynolds.

Reproduction of water colour painting.

Three School pictures from colour prints by Denis Eden, Byam Shaw, R.I., Hy. H. Payne, reproduced from wall paintings in the House of Commons.

Photogravure reproduction of self portrait by Rembrandt.

Four-colour print of picture entitled "Hope, by G. F. Watts.

STANDS 24 & 25.

Lithographed posters by Spenser Pryse, A. J. Hartrick, Fred Taylor, T. R. Way, and others.

STANDS 26 & 27.

"Docks at Wapping" by Frank Brangwyn, A.R.A. and other lithographed posters.

"Chiswick Mall," by F. Ernest Jackson.

STANDS 28 & 29.

Set of three posters for a Drapery establishment by Minnie McLeish. A Box Maker's and other advertisements.

Two theatrical posters by Palmer Jones; concert and and other announcements.

SCREENS 30, 31.

Two posters by Joseph Pennell and Harry Becker, Furniture Maker's, Engineers' and Wine Merchant's advertising matter, stationery matter.

SCREEN 32.

Two posters by Joseph Simpson and Wm. Nicholson.

SCREEN 33.

Railway poster. Title and other pages of a book to advertise Advertisers.

SCREENS 34, 35.

Tram, Railway and Theatrical posters by George Kruger, Fred Taylor and others.

On the remaining screens, numbered 36 to 41, a few specimens of German and Austrian printing are exhibited to illustrate work in a corresponding field, and to show how far design and industry are co-ordinated towards effienciency in those countries.

POSTSCRIPT

The Committee of the Design and Industries Association (D.I.A.) has thought it better, to avoid any possible misconception as to the objects of this Exhibition, not to print the printers' and engravers' names in the catalogue.

Where good work, apt for the purpose and readily accessible, has been fouud it has been exhibited: while, to avoid repetition equally good work has been left out. Hence it was thought that a Catalogue with the various items credited in detail to their exhibitors might create an unfair impression as against other eligible exhibitors equally capable who were in fact unrepresented. The D.I.A., however, will be pleased to give, now or at any time, through the consultative committee which exists for the purpose, any information or assistance within its power to any user of printed matter anxious to assist in the good work of getting the best out of our fine English tradition and the excellent raw material which exists.

The Committee wishes to thank the following collectors who have lent characteristic exhibits:—

Miss Alma Tadema, Messrs. A. Bakshy, A. E. R. Gill, A. S. Hartrick, Frank Pick, and Emery Walker; Messrs. Hachette, Messrs. Williams and Norgate, and all the business houses, printers, designers, publishers, engravers and advertisers who have most generously and without any regard to their individual interests assisted them by preparing exhibits and rendering other services too numerous to mention.

For the Council of
The Design and Industries Association,
6 Queen Square, W.C.

HAMILTON T. SMITH,
CECIL C. BREWER,
Hon. Secretaries.

The following pamphlets have been published by the Association: "Design and Industry" (out of print), "Art and Workmanship (W. R. Lethaby), price 2d. per copy, or 1/6 per doz., post free, "A New Body with New Aims." price 3d. per copy, 2/6 per doz. post free.

The Cover was designed and given by Mr. F. Gayton, Spencer Chambers, Market Place, Leicester.